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ABSTRACT

A case study of the Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education, an Open University school, is presented. Areas of discussion include characteristics of the country, the educational system of Sri Lanka, and the university. Specific topics include: the physical setting of Sri Lanka: the population: society and culture: the economy: the political situation: communications: teacher training: technical and vocational education: higher education: nonformal and adult education: educational broadcasting: administration and financing of education: origins of the Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education: types of students: instructional programs: higher national certificate in technology: instructional media and methods: curriculum development: student admission, registration, and records: student assessment: and organization and administration of the university. (SW)

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உயர்தரக் கல்வி அமைச்சு—இலங்கைத் தொலைக்கல்வி நிறுவகம்

Ministry of Higher Education—Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education

A Case Study in Distance Learning Systems

THE SRI LANKA INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATI

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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A.R. Kaye

January 1979

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The Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education

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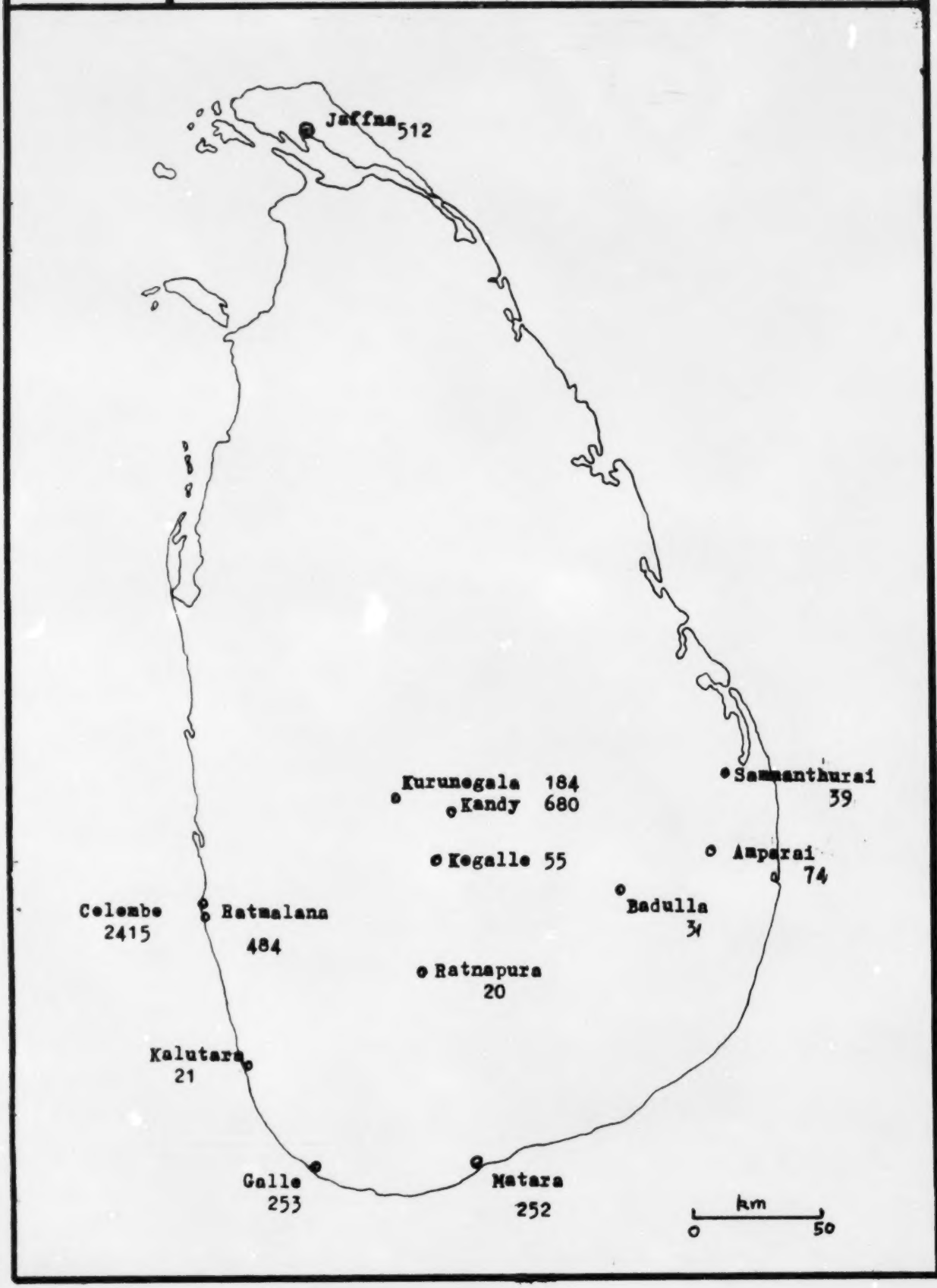
SLIDE 1978	STUDENT DISTRIBUTION TO VARIOUS TECHNICAL INSTITUTES FOR TUTORIAL CLASSES .



PART A : THE COUNTRY

Physical Setting

1. Sri Lanka lies in the Indian Ocean, separated from the southern extremity of India by shallow straits only thrity miles wide. Its area is64,850 km^2 (25,332 $miles^2$) - about half the size of England. The island consists of a central massif rising to over 8,000 feet, surrounded by lower land. The country is relatively well watered by short and steep rivers.

2. Although essentially tropical, the climate is equitable, with mean temperatures ranging from 26 - 28°C in Colombo, and 14 - 17°C in some of the hill stations. The south west of the island, and the massif, receive adequate rain ('wet zone'); the rest of the island ('dry zone') receives erratic rainfall and the soil is relatively poor for agricultural purposes.

Population

3. The 1975 population was 13.6 million, and growth rate is around 1.8% p.a. Average population density is around 520 inhabitants to the square mile; the urban population is 22% of the total with almost half of it concentrated in and around the capital, Colombo. Around 60% of the population is below 25 years of age.

4. A variety of different groups make up the population:

   (i) Sinhalese: about 72% of the population, speak Sinhala

   (ii) Tamils: of South Indian origin, speak Tamil. Composed of 'Ceylon' Tamils (11.1% of the population) whose ancestors first came to the island 2,000 years ago, and 'Indian' Tamils (9.4% of the population) who are descended from plantation workers brought in by the British in the 19th century.

   (iii) Moslims: originally of Arab descent, about 7% of the population, speak the language of the group amongst whom they live.

   (iv) Burghers: mainly of European descent, mother tongue English, about 50,000 altogether.

Society and culture

5. Before European colonisation, social structure was firmly based on the village community and the family. Although a 'westernised' elite now exists, as well as a small but growing industrial and mercantile clan, 70% of the population is still made up of peasants and small farmers.

6. Buddhism has shaped Ceylanese culture and traditions for over twelve centuries, and today almost 70% of the population is Buddhist. Many habits, customs and beliefs are influenced by Buddhist philosophy, which penetrates nearly all aspects of daily life. Nearly all the Sinhalese are Buddhist. The Tamil population, on the other hand, is predominantly Hindu in its reiigious beliefs and practices.

7. An extraordinary and complex civilisation flourished in Sri Lanka over a period of 14 centuries from the first century BC. This civilisation left behind the ruins of great cities (such as Anuradhapura) and evolved a gigantic and intricate system of dams, resevoirs, canals and sluices to irrigate the northern plains for rice cultivation. Since the sixteenth century, Ceylon was the target, successively, of Portuguese, Dutch and British colonisation. The British, notably, created large-scale coffee and tea plantations, and developed roads and railways.

The Economy

8. Agriculture and related activities accounted for about 32% of GNP in 1975. Around 80% of the island's total exports are accounted for by coconut, rubber and tea. Rice is the principal domestic crop, and self-sufficiency in rice is expected to result from improved irrigation in the north, as a result of the massive Mahaweli Development Programme, inaugurated in 1976. (This project will also embrace flood control, domestic water supply, and hydro-electric power). Recent imports of rice have come from the People's Republic of China (under the rubber for rice barter agreement), Thailand and Pakistan.

9. Industrial development is limited because of the paucity of natural resources on the island. A variety of precious and semi-precious stones are mined, and there is some graphite and iron ore. It is also very likely that there are commercially viable off-shore oil deposits. Manufacturing industry represented 13% of GNP in 1975, and is primarily concerned with food processing, textiles, tobacco products, chemicals, cement and petroleum refining.

10. Sri Lanka's principal trading partner since 1975 is the People's Republic of China; before then it was the UK. Foreign aid for development projects has come from the Middle East countries, Japan, the Netherlands, the USSR, the Federal Republic of Germany, the USA and Britain. Internal revenue finances a comparatively advanced welfare system (including a health network with over 450 hospitals), and increased spending on food subsidies and education resulted in a record budget deficit in 1976.

11. Annual economic growth rates of 3% in real terms have been experienced in recent years, but there has also been an increasing gap between the rising prices of manufactured imports, and the prices of exported tea, coffee and sugar. Moreover, faster economic growth is expected as a result of new policies introduced in 1977 - 1978.

12. Unemployment and under-employment remain serious problems in Sri Lanka (at least 20% of the available labour force is unemployed). Hopefully, new development and investment projects in the island (including free trade zones) will help reduce this figure. Unemployment benefits have recently been introduced.

The Political Situation

13. Ceylon achieved independence as a member of the Commonwealth in 1948, to be ruled by a Parliamentary system on the British model. There has been in the past a degree of political instability, marked by occasional eruptions of violence (eg. in 1956, and in 1959 when Mr. S.W.D. Bandaraneike, the current prime minister, was assassinated). There were reported to have been two attempted coups in the 1960's, and an abortive rising by senior police and military officers in 1962. Again, in 1971, there was a violent insurrection from the left, involving many young people, frustrated at the lack of employment prospects.

14. A United Front Government came into power in 1970, for a seven year period. But it lost its Trotskyist and Communist elements, leaving Mrs. Bandaraneike's social democratic party - the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) - in sole power. This government introduced a new constitution in 1972, declaring Sri Lanka a republic, still within the Commonwealth. A National State Assembly was created, and the governor general was replaced by the President of the Republic.

15. In the July 1977 elections the SLFP was heavily defeated, amidst a climate of accusations of nepotism and corruption from the Opposition, and Mr. J.R. Jayawardene's United National Party gained 139 out of the 168 seats in the National Assembly. The SLFP retained only 7 seats.

16. In February 1978 a new presidential style of government was introduced, effectively meaning the end of nearly fourty years of Westminster style parliamentary government. The first president is J.R. Jayawardene, who is also head of the executive, head of government, and commander in chief of the armed forces. The powers of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet have been drastically curtailed.

Communications

17. Communications are relatively well developed in Sri Lanka, with a good network of tarred roads, 937 miles of railway track connecting the main towns, and a good public bus service. Internal air services serve several towns in the north and east. Radio broadcasting is well developed, and the Government is considering introducing television.

PART B : THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

18. Education is compulsory and free between the ages of 5 and 14, and the majority of schools are State-controlled and co-educational. There are about 10,000 primary and secondary schools, with 2.6 million pupils, and 29 teacher training colleges, with over 9,000 students. The University of Sri Lanka is divided into five campuses (4 in or near Colombo, one at Kandy, one at Jaffna), catering (in 1974 for 12,000 students. There are fifteen Technical Institutes in the island, with an enrolment of about 21,000 in 1975/76 (half full-time, half part-time).

19. Figure 1 summarises the system as it stood in 1977, after the reforms introduced in 1972. These reforms were aimed at providing a general education more suitable to present needs, and a key element is the phasing out of teaching in English in the schools, leaving Tamil and Sinhala as the media of instruction. During the transitional period (1972-79) both old and new curricula exist side by side.

20. In principle, the academic year, for the whole system, runs from January to December, with three three-month terms each separated by a month's vacation. However, recent political disturbances, and the implementation of the new reforms, have caused some disarray in the school year, and the start of new terms depends to some extent on the political situation at any given time.

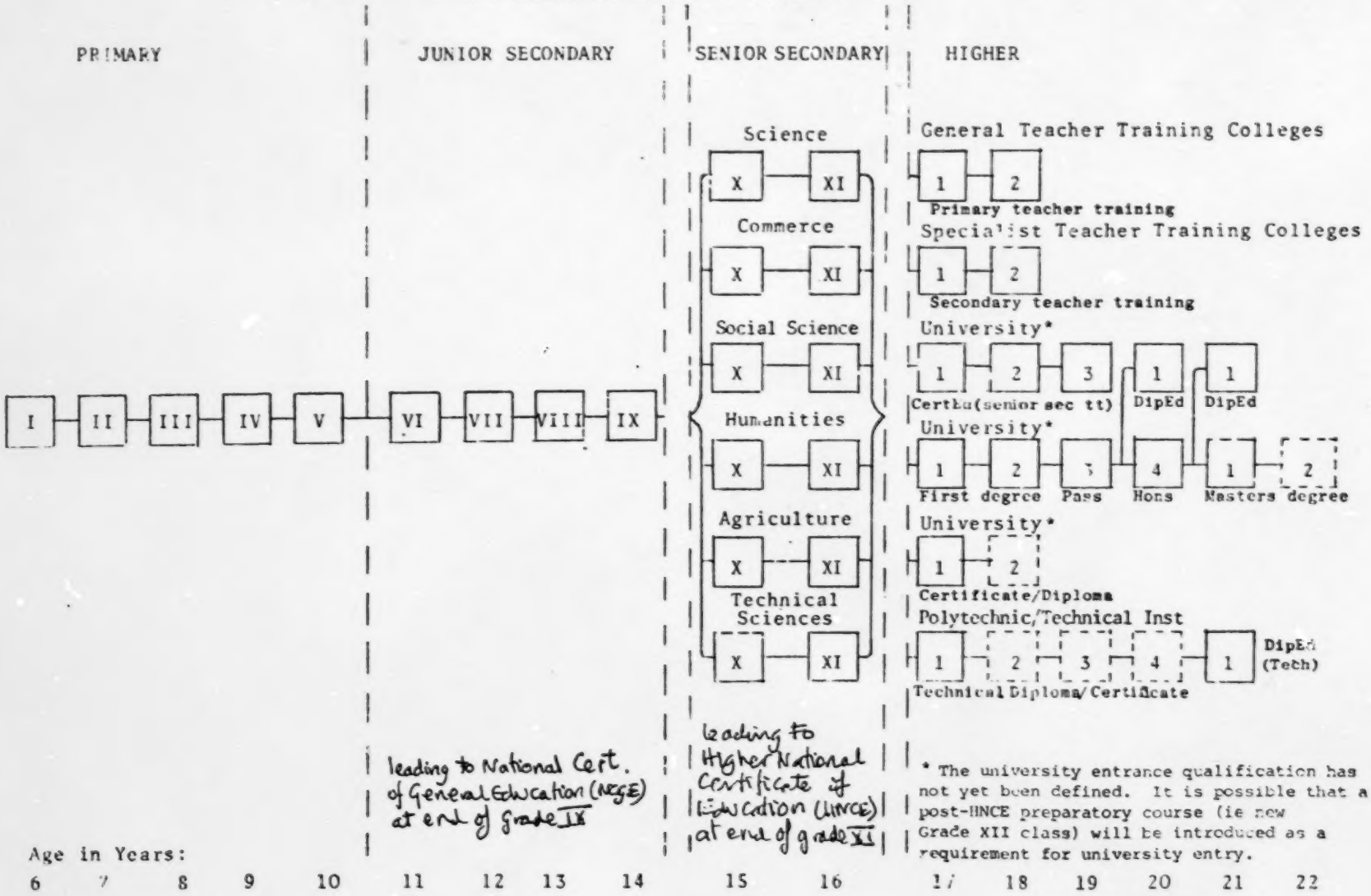
Schools

21. In 1970 the proportions of school-age population attending school were as follows:

- primary (age 5 - 9): 76%
- junior secondary (age 10 - 14): 68%
- senior secondary (age 15 - 19): 28%

There are no wide differences between the rates of male and female participation in the school system. However, there are regional disparities in provision, with the more remote rural areas having the least satisfactory provision of school places and teachers, especially in subjects such as Science and English (both of importance for subsequent entry to higher education courses leading to suitable employment).

FIGURE 1 : THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF SRI LANKA



* The university entrance qualification has not yet been defined. It is possible that a post-HNCE preparatory course (ie new Grade XII class) will be introduced as a requirement for university entry.

22. The vast majority of schools (8,622 in 1975) are run by the Government; whereas private schools account for less than 2% of the country's total enrolment. In addition there are about 770 estate schools, providing classes for the children of Indian Tamils working on the tea and rubber estates (up to grade V only). There are also 289 pirivenas (Buddhist seminaries) providing basic education.

Teacher Training

23. Minimum qualification for teaching has been 4 GCE 'O' level passes, and teachers must serve a two year probationary period in a school before becoming eligible for a teacher training course.

24. Three main types of courses are offered.

- one year courses held at the University's Department of Education in Colombo, leading to a post-graduate diploma in education.
- two-year courses in specialist subjects (English, Science, Maths etc) in teacher training colleges, leading to designation as a 'secondary trained teacher'
- two year courses in colleges specialising in primary education.

Altogether there are 29 teacher training colleges. Field study centres are being established to provide seminars and other tuition for in-service training.

25. The general expansion of the education system, despite provision of training colleges, has led to an accumulation of untrained teachers. For example, in 1973, out of 87,000 teachers under the age of 45, 37,000 were untrained. While the general shortage of teachers continues, untrained staff will continue to be recruited.

Technical and Vocational Education

26. These studies cover engineering and related fields, commerce and business studies, and agriculture. The 15 Technical Institutes cater for around 21,000, almost equally divided between full and part-time students. Seven of the Technical Institutes have been up-graded to Polytechnics, and these concentrate on technician level courses in engineering and related fields, as well as Diploma courses in commerce and business studies. The minimum

age for admission to a Technical Institute is 17 and entry qualifications range from unsuccessful completion of grade VIII, to successful completion of the HNCE or GCE 'A' level.

Higher Education

27. The University was established by the University of Ceylon Act 1972 and comprises 6 campuses, four of which were formerly separate universities. The current government is in favour of splitting the current campuses into three separate universities. The university is financed exclusively from central government funds, all academic matters are controlled by the University Senate. Each campus has a President and a Campus Board.

28. Entrance to university has traditionally been via the GCE 'A' level examination; new requirements arising from establishment of the HNCE examination are still being defined. Competition for university places is fierce (eg. 16,000 qualified entrants in 1976) and discussions are being held about the feasibility of a one-year pre-university course. Large numbers of GCE 'A' level holders (currently around 40,000) are enrolled as external degree students with the University's External Services Agency; no teaching is provided for them by the university, and private 'tutories' fill this need to some extent.

29. University courses cover the full range of conventional higher studies, and new disciplines and courses related to job opportunities have also been created. The language medium used for teaching varies between campus and discipline; some courses are in English only (eg. some Science and Architecture courses); all lectures in years 1 - 3 of the Arts faculties - with the exception of Honours courses - are in Tamil or Sinhala. About 60% of all students at the university are enrolled in the Arts faculties. Facilities for post-graduate studies and research are minimal, thus forcing able graduates to go abroad to qualify for higher degrees.

Non-Formal and Adult Education

30. A workers' continuing education course exists at the Colombo and Peradeniya campuses of the university. In 1976 a new post of Director of Non-Formal Education was established in the Ministry of Education, with a role of co-ordinating the different Ministries' efforts in the field.

31. At the village level, there exist a number of non-formal education programmes, these include:

- youth work (eg. practical farm schools)
- technical training
- rural development activities

Some of these are government organised, others non-government (eg. Sarvodaya, a Buddhist movement which runs youth farms and youth leadership courses).

Educational Broadcasting

32. The Educational Broadcasting Service provides a number of radio programmes in Aesthetics, English, Languages, Maths, Science and Social Sciences for the schools. There are approximately 1,350 radio sets at registered listening schools, and 650 schools make regular use of school broadcasts each term.

Administration and Financing of Education

33. Education is highly centralised within the Ministry of Education, which prescribes curricula, syllabuses and text-books, issues directives on methods of instruction, conducts examinations, and is responsible for recruitment, training and allocation of teachers. The Ministry's Department of Educational Publications provides text-books for schools and the University.

34. In 1978, a Ministry of Higher Education was established with responsibility for the university and for most other institutions of post-secondary education.

35. 15 Regional Directors of Education are responsible for day-to-day administration and management of schools within each region.

36. Apart from private and estate schools, the entire education system is government financed (all tuition fees were abolished in 1945). In 1976, about 10% of all government finance was spent on education, representing about 4.5% of GNP.

SRI LANKA INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION (SLIDE)

1. Origins

37. SLIDE was created in May 1977 from a merger between the Technical Education Extension Services Unit (set up in 1976) and the Technical Education Curriculum Development Unit. It is designed to provide technical and educational courses suitable for working adults, at low cost: hence the distance teaching option.

2. Who For?

38. There are three main groups of students at the moment enrolled on SLIDE courses:-

(i) School-leavers at the G.C.E (O.L) and G.C.E. (A.L)

(ii) unemployed adults

(iii) employed adults such as teachers, clerical officers, accounts clerks, craftsmen and technicians.

39. All applicants must possess appropriate prerequisite qualifications to be able to enrol on a given course (hence entry is not open). At the moment unemployed school-leavers seem to form the largest single group. Average student age is in the 20-25 range.

40. Current student numbers (Nov. 1978):5,020 enrolled. Almost two thirds of current students live in and around Colombo; smaller numbers in other main towns (see map).

3. What Courses?

41. Two groups of courses are currently being offered:
(i) National Diploma (ND) Courses in Maths., and Science and a Higher National Diploma (HND) Course in Management Studies. The ND Courses are planned as three year courses and the HND Course as a four year course with syllabuses and examination schemes formulated by joint teams drawn from the Universities, Technical Institutes and the Ministry's C.D.C. The courses assume a minimum knowledge of three relevant G.C.E. A.L subjects

(and applicants must have successfully passed in at least three subjects at one sitting to be accepted on a course).

(ii) Higher National Certificate in Technology

Courses in Electrical and Electronics and Telecommunications, Mechanical and Civil Technology. These are intended primarily as in-service courses for working technical personnel and are being run in collaboration with the various Government Departments. Two of these courses have recently started (Electrical Technology and Electrical and Telecommunications Technology) and it is hoped that they will cater especially for Government technical personnel working in remote parts of the island for whom no formal provision exists.

The two courses require a basic knowledge at G.C.E (O.L) or N.C.G.E level and students must have a pass in Science, Mathematics, Language at this level to be enrolled on these courses.

For those who are in employment and lack the basic knowledge it is planned to provide foundation courses which would enable them to follow these courses.

Other courses covering a range of technical and vocational subjects are currently being planned by SLIDE.

42. All course material (the printed and cyclostyled lessons) are available in three languages. The table below shows distribution of 1st and 2nd year students by language medium (1978 November figures).

Medium	Sinhalese	Tamil	English
Numbers	3848	696	476

4. What Methods & Media?

43. At the moment, the main bulk of SLIDE's teaching is carried out via printed or cyclostyled lessons, some of which contain self-assessment questions and exercises. The number of lessons per subject within a course is variable, as is the estimated study time per lesson, which may range from 1 - 10 hours. For ex ample, the first year of the N.D Science Course contains the following number of lessons per subject:-

Subject		No. of lessons
Group A		
Chemistry	(C)	100
Botany	(B)	60
Zoology	(Z)	65
Physics	(P)	55
Group B		
Agriculture	(A)	97
Management	(M)	40
Maths for Science	(MS)	40

A student must take three subjects selecting at least 2 from Group A in this course. So someone doing (B), (C) and (P) will have to study 5 - 6 lessons per week to keep up.

44. Week-end tutorials are organised in the premises of the Technical Institutes throughout the island (see map for locations of 1978 week-end classes). Classes in Sinhala are available at 13 of these 18 centres but only 5 centres have classes in Tamil and 4 in English.

45. Laboratory and practical experience at present is given at the University Campuses during their vacations (Science Course) and on-the-job (Technology Courses). Laboratories for SLIDE are now being constructed at centres in Jaffna, Kandy and Ratmalana with finances from a Government vote. Orders have been placed for

Science laboratory equipment with budgetary support from SIDA (the Swedish development agency).

18 Workshops are also to be started at the Technical Institutes for the purpose of demonstrations/practical work relating to the Technology courses. Part of the equipment for these workshops is being purchased from SIDA funds.

46. Plans are being made for use of audio-cassettes to support part of the teaching on some courses. One proposal is that portable cassette players and a stock of tapes might be held at the Technical Institutes for students to borrow and use in situ. Several tapes have already been made. Eventual use of radio is also a possibility.

5. Course Creation

47. Courses are planned and almost entirely written by external staff: mainly from the University and Technical Institutes. Panels are established for each subject area within each course, to formulate the course structure and syllabus, and to assign responsibility for lessons to specific writers (writers receive a fee per lesson - see para 66). Some external members and writers also act as panel editors and as week-end tutors. Completed lessons are sent, normally hand-written, to SLIDE for translation and typing/printing (see Course Production).

48. Almost exclusive use of external writers is related to the fact that SLIDE has only a few academic staff of university status of its own, and also that it has made commendable efforts to ensure the contributions and support of the existing highly qualified academic staff available in the country. This is illustrated in the table below, which shows the total numbers of panel members per course (1978), as well as those holding Ph.D's and those of professorial status.

Course Area	Numbers of panel members		
	Total	*Ph.D	Professorial
Management	60	1	1
Mathematics	15	7	2
Science	30	20	5
Technology	11	6	6

* Predominantly awarded at British Universities

49. There can be no doubt as to the academic excellence of SLIDE's panel members and external writers. Any problems that do arise in the writing of course material relate to the need for training opportunities in writing materials for distance teaching (as opposed to writing research papers and lecture notes) and in whole course planning and scheduling.

50. SLIDE currently has a bid in to the Treasury for a limited number of academic staff of its own to employ as full-time lesson-writers. It is proposed that some of these may be drawn on one or two year secondments from the University, and given special training in creating distance teaching courses, and in liaising with the external, part-time writers.

6. Course Production

51. Manuscripts of lessons prepared by external writers are sent to SLIDE's offices in Colombo for production. Any illustrations (very few are used) are generally prepared as line drawings by the writer concerned. The production process, complicated by the need to have all materials in three languages, is:

(i) translation of the writer's text into the other two languages (generally done by external, part-time staff)

(ii) basic editing

(iii) typing onto stencils (SLIDE has 2 - 3 typists per language medium)

(iv) cyclostyling (or external printing for some courses). Turn-round time in extreme cases on steps (i) - (iv) above can be as short as five days in cases where lessons have been handed in behind schedule.

52. The requirement to prepare material in the three languages, although posing potentially serious problems in terms of production scheduling, storage, and distribution, could in the long term lead to creation of a vast stock of published materials in Sinhalese in Scientific and Technical subjects. The potential contribution of SLIDE in this respect should not be overlooked, given the current scarcity of existing teaching materials in this language in the country.

7. Course Distribution

53. Lesson materials are sent to students by SLIDE's mailing section through the postal services, which are efficient and rapid.

8. Student Admission, Registration & Records

54. The procedures are as follows:

(i) SLIDE advertises courses in the national press about 6 months before thet start, giving details of entry requirements etc.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
SRI LANKA INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
Correspondence Diploma Courses in Management Studies, Mathematics Science.

APPLICATIONS are invited from those who have passed in at least 3 subjects at the G.C.E (A/L) at one sitting to follow the above courses.

Handbook - priced at 2/25 per copy and application forms can be obtained from the Director, Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education, P.O. Box: 1537, New Secretariat Building, Maligawatta, Colombo 10 by calling over or by sending a money order in favour of the Director of the Institute.

Applications close on 30th September, 1977.

Ministry of Education, Secretary
Colombo 2.

(ii) Application forms are completed and sent back to SLIDE; applicants are required to give details on, inter alia, their academic and professional qualifications, their employment, and their closest Technical College (for tutorial classes).

(iii) Applicants are selected on the basis of their completed forms. In cases where applications exceed places available (e.g. for the Management Studies course, which had 10,000 applications in its first year) selection is on the basis of academic and employment criteria.

(iv) Selected applicants then have to come to the SLIDE offices in Colombo for a brief interview (mainly for checking on their examination certificates, which they bring with them). About 5% are rejected at this stage. The successful applicants then pay their registration fee and are given a letter confirming their enrolment.

(v) A file is then opened on each student, which contains his application form and copies of his examination certificates. The latter are then re-checked. All subsequent correspondence with the student is copied to his file. All files are course-based (students cannot enrol for more than one course at a time.

(vi) Just before the start of the course, each student receives a package containing standard letters of introduction from the Director of SLIDE and from the course co-ordinator, his registration number, forms for fees payment, his first batch of lesson materials, and details of assignment and tutorial arrangements.

55. All student records are course based: each course has a clerical section headed by a course co-ordinator, and each clerk is responsible for a given number of students. All communications - letters, fee payment details, lesson

despatch and assignment control - are recorded on the student's file.

9. Student Support

56. SLIDE's limited resources do not currently permit extensive support services to students to help them in their work with the correspondence lessons. Existing support is of three kinds:

(i) week-end tutorials (see para 44 above)

(ii) written comments by tutors on assignments submitted, plus standard model answers, (see para 57 below)

(iii) written answers to queries on administrative matters from the appropriate person in the student records section at SLIDE.

10. Assessment and Examination

57. Students on current Science, Maths and Management courses are required to submit 3 - 6 assignments each month (one per subject being taken). Assignments are sent to SLIDE where the student's clerk will pass them on, together with mark sheets and comment forms, to a tutor. The tutor returns the marked assignment to SLIDE, where the grade is entered on the student's record, and the comment sheet, marked script, a model answer, and the next assignment, are then sent to the student.

58. Conventionally monitored examinations are held at the end of each course year.

11. Organisation and Administration

59. SLIDE is responsible (since1978) to the newly created Ministry of Higher Education. It is run by a Director to whom individual course co-ordinators report. Currently a UNESCO Chief Technical Adviser and an Associate Expert and another expert provided under the Colombo Plan assists the Director in his work. Most of SLIDE's permanent staff are employed by the Ministry.

60. The organisation of SLIDE's main activities reflects the fact that most course materials are originated outside the Institute. Course co-ordinators and their teams are

responsible, on the one hand, for physical checking and production of course materials, and, on the other hand, for managing the course-based student records. A mailing section co-ordinates all incoming and out-going mail.

12. Control

61. Academic control of course materials (syllabus, structure, lesson content, examinations) is vested in the course panels of external writers, each headed by a senior chairman, drawn from the University or the Technical Institutes.

62. Financial control is the responsibility of the Director, who is required to cover all direct course-related costs from student fees (see para 65 below).

63. There are no formal procedures (e.g. student surveys etc) for formative evaluation of student reactions and study patterns. However, correspondence from students is all carefully filed, and is a valuable source of management information.

13. Resources

64. Staff: SLIDE employs about 150 full-time staff, predominantly clerical, also the co-ordinators and some full-time editors. External (part-time) staff include about 90 lesson writers, some editors/translators, and the part-time tutors.

65. Buildings, Equipment, Facilities: SLIDE is temporarily housed in large premises at the new Secretariat, Maligawatta in the district of Colombo, which are adequate for its current level of activities.

SIDA is planning to provide laboratory equipment to the SLIDE laboratories.

66. Finance: The Ministry covers the salary costs of all SLIDE's full-time staff, as well as other fixed costs and overheads associated with the SLIDE premises. Course-related operational costs must be covered from student

fees* (50 rupees registration and 25 rupees/month fees). Payments to all external writers (60 rupees/lesson) translators (12.50 rupees per page), editors (20 rupees/lesson), and tutors (17.50 rupees per hour for weekend classes and 2 rupees per correspondence script), as well as paper, postage, and printing costs must be met from the fees levied on students.

Average costs per student (income and expenditure) for the first year HND and ND courses are shown in the table below as an indication of the relative accuracy of the course-costs/student fees equation.

Course	actual cost per student in first year courses	
	income from fees	expenditure on direct costs
ND Science	392 rupees	523 rupees
ND Maths	317 rupees	193 rupees
HND Management	312 rupees	276 rupees

The expenditure figures also demonstrate effectively the low cost of providing teaching through SLIDE's system, even taking into account the additional sum per student that needs to be added for full-time staff salaries and for accommodation costs.

67. External Aid: UNESCO is covering the costs of an adviser and an Associate Expert to SLIDE and Colombo Plan covers the costs of another expert and has also provided some printing equipment, and study grants for staff members.

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* The level of fees is a source of complaint from many students, and it is estimated that about half of the drop-out figure of 45% in year I can be attributed to the relatively high level of fees. Note that ordinary university students do not pay fees.

ODM has helped with some library stock, grants, and training workshops. SIDA is likely to be providing assistance for laboratory equipment which could be used by SLIDE students.

Future Development

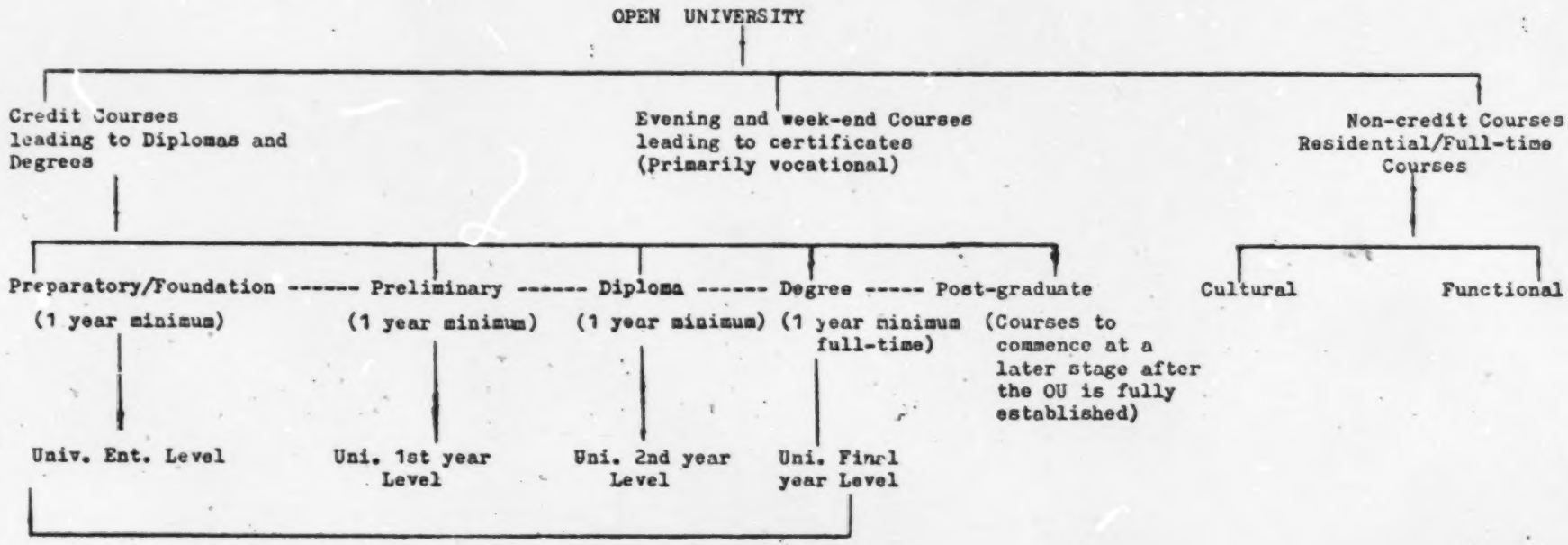
68. SLIDE's future development is very much tied up at the moment with the current plans for establishing an Open University in Sri Lanka. It is being proposed that such an institution should be set up with SLIDE and the University's Extension Services Agency (ESA) as its principal elements or nuclei.

69. The ESA provides an opportunity for suitably qualified people to enrol for, and be examined in, a range of subjects leading to an external degree. Fees are charged for both registration and examination, but virtually no teaching is provided by ESA for external degree students. Students have to rely on a course 'syllabus', which they receive on payment of their registration fee, their own initiative, and private fee-paying 'tutories' for teaching help. The most popular of ESA's external degrees are in the Arts and Law (for which a limited number of short radio broadcasts have been made).

70. A proposed course structure for the planned Open University (OU) is appended. Despite its title, the Sri Lanka OU is not intended to be as complex and grandiose in scale as the UKOU. The primary intention seems to be to bring together existing facilities and project within an 'umbrella' institution, thus achieving certain economies based on rational sharing of resources.

A suggested pattern for the proposed Open University courses

(from a preliminary report on the Sri Lankan Open University)


OPEN UNIVERSITY
Credit Courses leading to Diplomas and Degrees
Evening and week-end Courses leading to certificates (Primarily vocational)
Non-credit Courses Residential/Full-time Courses
Preparatory/Foundation ------ Preliminary ------ Diploma ------ Degree ----- Post-graduate
(1 year minimum)
(1 year minimum)
(1 year minimum)
(1 year minimum full-time)
(Courses to commence at a later stage after the OU is fully established)
Cultural
Functional
Univ. Ent. Level
Uni. 1st year Level
Uni. 2nd year Level
Uni. Final year Level

1. Arts, Humanities & Social Studies
2. Law, Management Studies & Commerce
3. Educational Studies
4. Science & Mathematics
5. Applied Science & Technology (presently available at the SLIDE)

(i) Correspondence lessons
(ii) Radio (and TV when introduced)
(iii) Face to face teaching at Regional & Study Centres
(iv) Intensive residential courses of short duration (about two weeks at a time)
(v) Science Kits (for Science based Courses)
(vi) Audio Visual Aids (Cassetts, tapes, films etc.)
(vii) Full time courses in Universities/Campuses of approved Institutions (for those proceeding to degree courses)